Revisionist turn in Post-socialist Feminist Art History (Warsaw, 4 Sep 26)

Institute of Art History, University of Warsaw, Sep 04, 2026
Deadline: Mar 1, 2026

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To keep one's ear to the ground: Revisionist turn in Post-socialist Feminist Art History.
International workshop focused on Emerging Methodologies, Agendas, and Knowledges.
Organized by Dr. Karolina Majewska-Güde, in collaboration with Prof. Agata Jakubowska and Dr. Wiktoria Szczupacka.

In recent years, post-socialist feminist art history has been shaped by several converging trends in historical research: the social-historical scholarship on emancipation under state socialism; the decolonial turn, which has opened important pathways for rethinking East-Central Europe semi-periphery—both through engagement with the histories of global socialism and through a critical reassessment of regional feminist research agendas; and, finally, contemporary critiques of the capitalist art institution from a reproductive feminist perspective. As a result, a growing body of scholarship has emerged that can be described as revisionist in its approach to state socialism. This research neither follows Western-centred narratives nor relies on nostalgia for socialism; instead, it is grounded in a more analytical understanding of women's emancipation that considers women's agency in socialism, and rethinks the role of culture within state socialist societies.
During the first two decades following 1989, feminist art historical discourse predominantly aligned with the agendas of Second Wave feminism as articulated in the United States and Western Europe. This process involved both the active forgetting of socialist scholarship on gender and training by proponents of what Françoise Vergès terms in a completely different context 'civilizational feminism'—into the gender studies methodologies developed at metropolitan universities. Today, researchers of the socialist past are beginning to 'discover' the richness of feminist-oriented research from state socialism, including women-led sociological studies on unpaid feminized domestic labour that demonstrated the significant contribution of women's work to the centralized socialist economy. Moreover, new approaches to studying the socialist past reveal the specificities of socialist art institutions, which integrated diverse artistic practices and knowledges across both mainstream and marginalized countercultural spheres.

While earlier feminist scholarship emphasized the recovery of marginalized histories and forgotten artists, more recent research sustains this essential work while also developing new critical frameworks that re-theorize art and its infrastructures as integral to the modernizing and transformative project of state socialism.
The workshop aims to bring together feminist researchers working with these new agendas and methodologies, and those who are exploring forms of knowledge production beyond established paradigms. It seeks to connect feminist art historians for a collective discussion about emerging

theoretical frameworks, methodological tools, and research directions in post-socialist feminist art history. The workshop will also offer an opportunity to discuss concrete needs and potential models for establishing a more permanent network among colleagues specializing in post-socialist feminist art history. One of the aims of the meeting is to develop a publication with the potential to evolve into an academic periodical devoted to research on post-socialist feminist art history.

We invite papers that problematize, but are not limited to, the following topics:
- Critical reassessments of the first wave of post-socialist feminist art history, particularly debates surrounding the category of “feminist art”
- Reflections on methodological challenges involved in studying state socialist emancipation
- New archival sources and approaches to the study of art in the context of state socialist emancipation
- New perspectives on emancipatory artistic practices in socialist Europe
- Gendered analyses of artistic working conditions under socialism and problematizations of art as a form of labour
- Transnational narratives of feminist art in socialist Europe
- Methodological approaches capable of incorporating vernacular realities and cultural productions, accounting for plural voices, and embracing embodied as well as affective modes of knowing

We welcome scholars to share their recent research (published or unpublished), discuss their questions, and engage with colleagues exploring art under state socialism from feminist perspectives.
Please submit an abstract for a 20-minute presentation, along with a short biographical note, to Karolina Majewska-Güde at k.majewska-gude@uw.edu.pl by 1 March 2026. We look forward to reading your proposals and will notify applicants of acceptance on 15 March 2026.

Reference:
CFP: Revisionist turn in Post-socialist Feminist Art History (Warsaw, 4 Sep 26). In: ArtHist.net, Jan 20, 2026 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/51529>.